



STEVEN K. YOUNG, DIRECTOR

Memo

To: Government Oversight Committee Members
From: Beverly A. Zylstra, Legislative Liaison
Date: December 7, 2005
Re: Food Inspections and Fees

The Department of Inspections and Appeals appreciates the opportunity to appear before the Government Oversight Committee on November 1 to discuss food inspections in the state of Iowa. At that meeting, a number of questions were asked regarding food inspections and fees. Following is DIA's response:

1. What is the cost to bring up fees to inspect all 5400 restaurants?

The Department's proposed legislation (attached) outlines the fees necessary to cover regulatory costs associated with meeting the Food Code inspection frequency requirements. This proposal addresses both the state and its contract partners meeting the requirements. Additional staffing and dollars would also be required to meet the inspection frequency requirements, which the adjusted fees would cover.

2. How many State staff would DIA need to do the inspections according to Code?

To conduct risk-based inspections for all counties covered by the state in FY06, DIA would need 22.00 FTE (18 inspectors, one supervisor, one program manager and two clerical).

3. Number of facilities closed due to the inspections?

For FY05, data for the counties covered by state inspectors and 21 of the 30 contracts shows one license revocation, nine license suspensions, nine mandatory closures, and 216 voluntary closures. A voluntary closure occurs when an establishment is allowed to voluntarily close, in lieu of mandated closure, due to code violations, such as insect or pest infestations, etc. The establishment is often rechecked and allowed to reopen when violations are corrected.

4. Number of inspections by contractors if fees are increased?

Using cost data for state inspectors, the Department's proposed legislation would allow the Food Code inspection frequency to be met for those counties covered by the state. Similarly, it would be anticipated that the contracts would also be able to meet the inspection frequency requirements if the Department's proposed legislation is enacted.

5. What is the fiscal revenue from the establishments previously covered by Polk and Jasper Counties?

\$375,000, which is deposited in the General Fund. As was mentioned at the meeting, DIA received no additional appropriation to cover Polk and Jasper Counties.

Please contact me at 515-281-6442 or at beverly.zylstra@dia.state.ia.us with additional questions.

Thank you for your interest in protecting Iowans from foodborne illnesses.